

BRYAN ACCEPTS

In Hearty Accord With Platform.

SHALL THE PEOPLE RULE

That Is the Overshadowing Question.

REPUBLICANS RESPONSIBLE.

All Present Abuses a Result of Their Acts, and They Are Im- potent to Correct Them.

Mr. Clayton and Gentlemen of the Notification Committee: I can not accept the nomination which you officially tender, without first acknowledging my deep indebtedness to the Democratic party for the extraordinary honor which it has conferred upon me. Having twice before been a candidate for the presidency, in campaigns which ended in defeat, a third nomination, the result of the free and voluntary act of the voters of the party, can only be explained by a substantial and undisputed growth in the principles and policies for which I, with a multitude of others, have contended. As these principles and policies have given me whatever political strength I possess, the action of the convention not only renews my faith in them, but strengthens my attachment to them.

A Platform Is Binding.

I shall, in the near future, prepare a more formal reply to your notification, and, in that letter of acceptance, will deal with the platform in detail. It is sufficient, at this time, to assure you that I am in hearty accord with both the letter and the spirit of the platform. I endorse it in whole and in part, and shall, if elected, regard its declarations as binding upon me. And, I may add, a platform is binding as to what it omits as well as to what it contains. According to the democratic idea, the people think for themselves and select officials to carry out their wishes. The voters are the sovereigns; the officials are the servants, employed for a fixed time and at a stated salary to do what the sovereigns want done, and to do it in the way the sovereigns want it done. Platforms are entirely in harmony with this democratic idea. A platform announces the party's position on the questions which are at issue; and an official is not at liberty to use the authority vested in him to urge personal views which have not been submitted to the voters for their approval. If one is nominated upon a platform which is not satisfactory to him, he must, if candid, either decline the nomination, or, in accepting it, propose an amended platform in lieu of the one adopted by the convention. No such situation, however, confronts your candidate, for the platform upon which I was nominated not only contains nothing from which I dissent, but it specifically outlines all the remedial legislation which we can hope to secure during the next four years.

Republican Challenge Accepted.

The distinguished statesman who received the Republican nomination for president said, in his notification speech: "The strength of the Republican cause in the campaign at hand is the fact that we represent the policies essential to the reform of known abuses, to the continuance of liberty and true prosperity, and that we are determined, as our platform unequivocally declares, to maintain them and carry them on."

In the name of the Democratic party, I accept the challenge, and charge that the Republican party is responsible for all the abuses which now exist in the federal government, and that it is impotent to accomplish the reforms which are imperatively needed. Further, I can not concur in the statement that the Republican platform unequivocally declares for the reforms that are necessary; on the contrary, I affirm that it openly and notoriously disappoints the hopes and expectations of reformers, whether those reformers be Republicans or Democrats. So far did the Republican convention fall short of its duty that the Republican candidate felt it necessary to add to his platform several important particulars, thus rebuking the leaders of the party, upon whose co-operation he must rely for the enactment of remedial legislation.

As I shall, in separate speeches, discuss the leading questions at issue, I shall at this time confine myself to the paramount question, and to the far-reaching purpose of our party, as that purpose is set forth in the platform.

Shall the People Rule?

Our platform declares that the over-

shadowing issue which manifests itself in all the questions now under discussion, is "Shall the people rule?" No matter which way we turn; no matter to what subject we address ourselves, the same question confronts us: Shall the people control their own government, and use that government for the protection of their rights and for the promotion of their welfare? or shall the representatives of predatory wealth prey upon a defenseless public, while the offenders secure immunity from subservient officials whom they raise to power by unscrupulous methods? This is the issue raised by the "known abuses" to which Mr. Taft refers.

President's Indictment Against the Party.

In a message sent to congress last January, President Roosevelt said: "The attacks by these great corporations on the administration's actions have been given a wide circulation throughout the country, in the newspapers and otherwise, by those writers and speakers who, consciously or unconsciously, act as the representatives of predatory wealth—of the wealth accumulated on a giant scale by all forms of iniquity, ranging from the oppression of wage earners to unfair and unwholesome methods of crushing out competition, and to defrauding the public by stock-jobbing and the manipulation of securities. Certain wealthy men of this stamp, whose conduct should be abhorrent to every man of ordinarily decent conscience, and who commit the hideous wrong of teaching our young men that phenomenal business success must ordinarily be based on dishonesty, have, during the last few months, made it apparent that they have banded together to work for a reaction. Their endeavor is to overthrow and discredit all who honestly administer the law, to prevent any additional legislation which would check and restrain them, and to secure, if possible, a freedom from all restraint which will permit every unscrupulous wrong-doer to do what he wishes unchecked, provided he has enough money."—What an arraignment of the predatory interests!

Is the president's indictment true? And, if true, against whom was the indictment directed? Not against the Democratic party.

Mr. Taft Endorses the Indictment.

Mr. Taft says that these evils have crept in during the last ten years. He declares that, during this time, some "prominent and influential members of the community, spurred by financial success and in their hurry for greater wealth, became unmindful of the common rules of business honesty and fidelity, and of the limitations imposed by law upon their actions"; and that "the revelations of the branches of trusts, the disclosures as to rebates and discriminations by railroads, the accumulating evidence of the violations of the anti-trust laws, by a number of corporations, and the over-issue of stocks and bonds of interstate railroads for the unlawful enriching of directors and for the purpose of concentrating the control of the railroads under one management,"—all these, he charges, "quicken the conscience of the people and brought on a moral awakening."

During all this time, I beg to remind you, Republican officials presided in the executive department, filled the cabinet, dominated the senate, controlled the house of representatives and occupied most of the federal judgeships. Four years ago the Republican platform boastfully declared that since 1860—with the exception of two years—the Republican party had been in control of part or of all the branches of the federal government; that for two years only was the Democratic party in a position to either enact or repeal a law. Having drawn the salaries; having enjoyed the honors; having secured the prestige, let the Republican party accept the responsibility!

Republican Party Responsible.

Why were these "known abuses" permitted to develop? Why have they not been corrected? If existing laws are sufficient, why have they not been enforced? All of the executive machinery of the federal government is in the hands of the Republican party. Are new laws necessary? Why have they not been enacted? With a Republican president to recommend, with a Republican senate and house to carry out his recommendations, why does the Republican candidate plead for further time in which to do what should have been done long ago? Can Mr. Taft promise to be more strenuous in the prosecution of wrong-doers than the present executive? Can he ask for a larger majority in the senate than his party now has? Does he need more Republicans in the house of representatives or a speaker with more unlimited authority?

Why No Tariff Reform?

The president's close friends have been promising for several years that he would attack the iniquities of the tariff. We have had intimation that Mr. Taft was restive under the demands of the highly protected industries. And yet the influence of the manufacturers, who have for twenty-five years contributed to the Republican campaign fund, and who in return have framed the tariff schedules, has been sufficient to prevent tariff reform. As the present campaign approached, both the president and Mr. Taft declared in favor of tariff revision, but set the date of revision after the election. But the pressure brought to bear by the protected interests has been great enough to prevent any attempt at tariff reform before the election; and the reduction promised after the election is so hedged about with qualifying phrases, that no one can estimate with accuracy the sum total of tariff reform to be expected in case of Republican success. If the past can be taken as a guide, the Republican party will be so obligated by campaign con-

tributions from the beneficiaries of protection, as to make that party powerless to bring to the country any material relief from the present tariff burdens.

Why No Anti-trust Legislation?

A few years ago the Republican leaders in the house of representatives were coerced by public opinion into the support of an anti-trust law which had the endorsement of the president, but the senate refused even to consider the measure, and since that time no effort has been made by the dominant party to secure remedial legislation upon this subject.

Why No Railroad Legislation?

For ten years the Interstate Commerce Commission has been asking for an enlargement of its powers, that it might prevent rebates and discriminations, but a Republican senate and a Republican house of representatives were unmoved by its entreaties. In 1900 the Republican national convention was urged to endorse the demand for railway legislation, but its platform was silent on the subject. Even in 1904 the convention gave no pledge to remedy these abuses. When the president finally asked for legislation he drew his inspiration from three Democratic national platforms and he received more cordial support from the Democrats than from the Republicans. The Republicans in the senate deliberately defeated several amendments offered by Senator La Follette and supported by the Democrats—amendments embodying legislation asked by the Interstate Commerce Commission. One of these amendments authorized the ascertainment of the value of railroads. This amendment was not only defeated by the senate, but it was overwhelmingly rejected by the recent Republican national convention, and the Republican candidate has sought to rescue his party from the disastrous results of this act by expressing himself, in a qualified way, in favor of ascertaining the value of the railroads.

Over-issue of Stocks and Bonds.

Mr. Taft complains of the over-issue of stocks and bonds of railroads, "for the unlawful enriching of directors and for the purpose of concentrating the control of the railroads under one management," and the complaint is well founded. But, with a president to point out the evil, and a Republican congress to correct it, we find nothing done for the protection of the public. Why? My honorable opponent has, by his confession, relieved me of the necessity of furnishing proof; he admits the condition and he can not avoid the logical conclusion that must be drawn from the admission. There is no doubt whatever that a large majority of the voters of the Republican party recognize the deplorable situation which Mr. Taft describes; they recognize that the masses have had but little influence upon legislation or upon the administration of the government, and they are beginning to understand the cause. For a generation the Republican party has drawn its campaign funds from the beneficiaries of special legislation. Privileges have been pledged and granted in return for money contributed to debauch elections. What can be expected when official authority is turned over to the representatives of those who first furnish the sheaves of war and then reimburse themselves out of the pockets of the taxpayers?

Fasting in Wilderness Necessary.

So long as the Republican party remains in power, it is powerless to regenerate itself. It can not attack wrong-doing in high places without disgracing many of its prominent members, and it, therefore, uses opiates instead of the surgeon's knife. Its malefactors consume each Republican victory as an endorsement of their conduct and threaten the party with defeat if they are interfered with. Not until that party passes through a period of fasting in the wilderness, will the Republican leaders learn to study public questions from the standpoint of the masses. Just as with individuals, "the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the truth," so in politics, when party leaders serve far away from home and are not in constant contact with the voters, continued party success blinds their eyes to the needs of the people and makes them deaf to the cry of distress.

Publicity as to Campaign Contributions.

An effort has been made to secure legislation requiring publicity as to campaign contributions and expenditures; but the Republican leaders, even in the face of an indignant public, refused to consent to a law which would compel honesty in elections. When the matter was brought up in the recent Republican national convention, the plank was repudiated by a vote of 880 to 94. Here, too, Mr. Taft has been driven to apologize for his convention and to declare himself in favor of a publicity law; and yet, if you will read what he says upon this subject, you will find that his promise falls far short of the requirements of the situation. He says:

"If I am elected president, I shall urge upon congress, with every hope of success, that a law be passed requiring the filing, in a federal office, of a statement of the contributions received by committees and candidates in elections for members of congress, and in such other elections as are constitutionally within the control of congress."

I shall not embarrass him by asking him upon what he bases his hope of success; it is certainly not on any encouragement he has received from Republican leaders. It is sufficient to say that if his hopes were realized—if, in spite of the adverse action of his convention, he should succeed in securing the enactment of the very law which he favors, it would give but partial relief. He has read the Democratic platform; not only his language, but his

evident alarm, indicates that he has read it carefully. He even had before him the action of the Democratic national committee in interpreting and applying that platform; and yet, he fails to say that he favors the publication of the contributions before the election. Of course, it satisfies a natural curiosity to find out how an election has been purchased, even when the knowledge comes too late to be of service, but why should the people be kept in darkness until the election is past? Why should the locking of the door be delayed until the horse is gone?

An Election a Public Affair.

An election is a public affair. The people, exercising the right to select their officials and to decide upon the policies to be pursued, proceed to their several polling places on election day and register their will. What excuse can be given for secrecy as to the influences at work? If a man, peculiarly interested in "concentrating the control of the railroads in one management," subscribes a large sum to aid in carrying the election, why should his part in the campaign be concealed until he has put the officials under obligation to him? If a trust magnate contributes \$100,000 to elect political friends to office, with a view to preventing hostile legislation, why should that fact be concealed until his friends are securely seated in their official positions?

This is not a new question; it is a question which has been agitated—a question which the Republican leaders fully understand—a question which the Republican candidate has studied, and yet he refuses to declare himself in favor of the legislation absolutely necessary, namely, legislation requiring publication before the election.

Democratic Party Promises Publicity.

How can the people hope to rule, if they are not able to learn until after the election what the predatory interests are doing? The Democratic party meets the issue honestly and courageously. It says:

"We pledge the Democratic party to the enactment of a law prohibiting any corporation from contributing to a campaign fund, and any individual from contributing an amount above a reasonable maximum, and providing for the publication, before election, of all such contributions above a reasonable minimum."

The Democratic national committee immediately proceeded to interpret and apply this plank, announcing that no contributions would be received from corporations, that no individual would be allowed to contribute more than \$10,000, and that all contributions above \$100 would be made public before the election—those received before October 15 to be made public on or before that day, those received afterward to be made public on the day when received, and no such contributions to be accepted within three days of the election. The expenditures are to be published after election. Here is a plan which is complete and effective.

Popular Election of Senators.

Next to the corrupt use of money, the present method of electing United States senators is most responsible for the obstruction of reforms. For one hundred years after the adoption of the constitution, the demand for the popular election of senators, while finding increased expression, did not become a dominant sentiment. A constitutional amendment had from time to time been suggested and the matter had been more or less discussed in a few of the states, but the movement had not reached a point where it manifested itself through congressional action. In the Fifty-second congress, however, a resolution was reported from a house committee proposing the necessary constitutional amendment, and this resolution passed the house of representatives by a vote which was practically unanimous. In the Fifty-third congress a similar resolution was reported to, and adopted by, the house or representatives. Both the Fifty-second and Fifty-third congresses were Democratic. The Republicans gained control of the house as a result of the election of 1894 and in the Fifty-fourth congress the proposition died in committee. As time went on, however, the sentiment grew among the people, until it forced a Republican congress to follow the example set by the Democrats, and then another and another Republican congress acted favorably. State after state has endorsed this reform, until nearly two-thirds of the states have recorded themselves in its favor. The United States senate, however, impudently and arrogantly obstructs the passage of the resolution notwithstanding the fact that the voters of the United States, by an overwhelming majority, demand it. And this refusal is the more significant when it is remembered that a number of senators owe their election to great corporate interests. Three Democratic national platforms—the platforms of 1900, 1904 and 1908—specifically call for a change in the constitution which will put the election of senators in the hands of the voters, and the proposition has been endorsed by a number of the smaller parties, but no Republican national convention has been willing to champion the cause of the people on this subject. The subject was ignored by the Republican national convention in 1900; it was ignored in 1904, and the proposition was explicitly repudiated in 1908, for the recent Republican national convention, by a vote of 896 to 114, rejected the plank endorsing the popular election of senators—and this was done in the convention which nominated Mr. Taft, few delegates from his own state voting for the plank.

Personal Inclination Not Sufficient.

In his notification speech, the Republican candidate, speaking of the election of senators by the people, says: "Personally, I am inclined to favor it, but it is hardly a party question." What is necessary to make this a party question? When the Democratic convention endorses a proposition by a unanimous vote, and the Republican convention rejects the proposition by a vote of seven to one, does it not become an issue between the parties? Mr. Taft can not remove the question from the arena of politics by expressing a personal inclination toward the Democratic position. For several years he has been connected with the administration. What has he ever said or done to bring this question before the public? What enthusiasm has he shown in the reformation of the senate? What influence could he exert in behalf of a reform which his party has openly and notoriously condemned in its convention, and to which he is attached only by a belated expression of personal inclination?

The Gateway to Other Reforms.

"Shall the people rule?" Every remedial measure of a national character must run the gauntlet of the senate. The president may personally incline toward a reform; the house may consent to it; but as long as the senate obstructs the reform, the people must wait. The president may heed a popular demand; the house may yield to public opinion; but as long as the senate is defiant, the rule of the people is defeated. The Democratic platform very properly describes the popular election of senators as "the gateway to other national reforms."

Shall We Open the Gate, or Shall We Allow the Exploiting Interests to Bar the Way by the Control of this Branch of the Federal Legislature?

Through a Democratic victory, and through a Democratic victory only, can the people secure the popular election of senators. The smaller parties are unable to secure this reform; the Republican party, under its present leadership, is resolutely opposed to it; the Democratic party stands for it and has boldly demanded it. If I am elected to the presidency, those who are elected upon the ticket with me will be, like myself, pledged to this reform, and I shall convene congress in extraordinary session immediately after inauguration, and ask, among other things, for the fulfillment of this platform pledge.

House Rules Despotism.

The third instrumentality employed to defeat the will of the people is found in the rules of the house of representatives. Our platform points out that "the house of representatives was designed by the fathers of the constitution, to be the popular branch of our government, responsive to the public will," and adds:

"The house of representatives, as controlled in recent years by the Republican party, has ceased to be a deliberative and legislative body, responsive to the will of a majority of the members, but has come under the absolute domination of the speaker, who has entire control of its deliberations, and powers of legislation."

"We have observed with amazement the popular branch of our federal government helpless to obtain either the consideration or enactment of measures desired by a majority of its members."

This arraignment is fully justified. The reform Republicans in the house of representatives, when in the minority in their own party, are as helpless to obtain a hearing or to secure a vote upon a measure as are the Democrats. In the recent session of the present congress, there was a considerable element in the Republican party favorable to remedial legislation; but a few leaders, in control of the organization, despotically suppressed these members, and thus forced a real majority in the house to submit to a well organized minority. The Republican national convention, instead of rebuking this attack upon popular government, eulogized congress and nominated as the Republican candidate for vice president one of the men who shared in the responsibility for the coercion of the house. Our party demands that "the house of representatives shall again become a deliberative body, controlled by a majority of the people's representatives, and not by the speaker," and is pledged to adopt "such rules and regulations to govern the house of representatives as will enable a majority of its members to direct its deliberations and control legislation."

"Shall the people rule?" They can not do so unless they can control the house of representatives, and through their representatives in the house, give expression to their purposes and their desires. The Republican party is committed to the methods now in vogue in the house of representatives; the Democratic party is pledged to such a revision of the rules as will bring the popular branch of the federal government into harmony with the ideas of those who framed our constitution and founded our government.

Other Issues Will Be Discussed Later.

"Shall the people rule?" I repeat, is declared by our platform to be the overshadowing question, and as the campaign progresses, I shall take occasion to discuss this question as it manifests itself in other issues; for whether we consider the tariff question, the trust question, the railroad question, the banking question, the labor question, the question of imperialism, the development of our waterways, or any other of the numerous problems which press for solution, we shall find that the real question involved in each is, whether the government shall remain a mere business asset of favor seeking corporations or be an instrument in the hands of the people for the advancement of the common weal.

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we can not reasonably ask for a change in administration; if, however, the voters feel that the people, as a whole, have too little influence in shaping the policies of the government; if they feel that great combinations of capital have encroached upon the rights of the masses, and employed the instrumentalities of government to secure an unfair share of the total wealth produced, then we have a right to expect a verdict against the Republican party and in favor of the Democratic party; for our party has risked defeat—aye, suffered defeat—in its effort to arouse the conscience of the public and to bring about that very awakening to which Mr. Taft has referred.

Only those are worthy to be entrusted with leadership in a great cause who are willing to die for it, and the Democratic party has proven its worthiness by its refusal to purchase victory by delivering the people into the hands of those who have despoiled them. In this contest between Democracy on the one side and plutocracy on the other, the Democratic party has taken its position on the side of equal rights, and invites the opposition of those who use politics to secure special privileges and governmental favoritism. Gauging the progress of the nation, not by the happiness or wealth or refinement of a few, but "by the prosperity and advancement of the average man," the Democratic party charges the Republican party with being the promoter of present abuses, the opponent of necessary remedies and the only bulwark of private monopoly. The Democratic party affirms that in this campaign it is the only party, having a prospect of success, which stands for justice in government and for equity in the division of the fruits of industry.

Democratic Party Defender of Honest Wealth.

We may expect those who have committed larceny by law and purchased immunity with their political influence, to attempt to raise false issues, and to employ "the livery of Heaven" to conceal their evil purposes, but they can no longer deceive. The Democratic party is not the enemy of any legitimate industry or of honest accumulations. It is, on the contrary, a friend of industry and the steadfast protector of that wealth which represents a service to society. The Democratic party does not seek to annihilate all corporations; it simply asserts that as the government creates corporations, it must retain the power to regulate and to control them, and that it should not permit any corporation to convert itself into a monopoly. Surely we should have the co-operation of all legitimate corporations in our effort to protect business and industry from the odium which lawless combinations of capital will, if unchecked, cast upon them. Only by the separation of the good from the bad can the good be made secure.

Not Revolution, but Reformation.

The Democratic party seeks not revolution but reformation, and I need hardly remind the student of history that cures are mildest when applied at once; that remedies increase in severity as their application is postponed. Blood poisoning may be stopped by the loss of a finger today; it may cost an arm tomorrow or a life the next day. So poison in the body politic can not be removed too soon, for the evils produced by it increase with the lapse of time. That there are abuses which need to be remedied, even the Republican candidate admits; that his party is unable to remedy them, has been fully demonstrated during the last ten years. I have such confidence in the intelligence as well as the patriotism of the people, that I can not doubt their readiness to accept the reasonable reforms which our party proposes, rather than permit the continued growth of existing abuses to hurry the country on to remedies more radical and more drastic.

Our Party's Ideal.

The platform of our party closes with a brief statement of the party's ideal. It favors "such an administration of the government as will insure, as far as human wisdom can, that each citizen shall draw from society a reward commensurate with his contribution to the welfare of society."

Governments are good in proportion as they assure to each member of society, so far as governments can, a return commensurate with individual merit.

The Divine Law of Rewards.

There is a Divine law of rewards. When the Creator gave us the earth, with its fruitful soil, the sunshine with its warmth, and the rains with their moisture, He proclaimed, as clearly as if His voice had thundered from the clouds, "Go work, and according to your industry and your intelligence, so shall be your reward." Only where might has overthrown, cunning undermined or government suspended this law, has a different law prevailed. To conform the government to this law ought to be the ambition of the statesman; and no party can have a higher mission than to make it a reality wherever governments can legitimately operate.

Justice to All.

Recognizing that I am indebted for my nomination to the rank and file of my party, and that my election must come, if it comes at all, from the unpurchased and unpurchasable suffrages of the American people, I promise, if entrusted with the responsibilities of this high office, to consecrate whatever ability I have to the one purpose of making this, in fact, a government in which the people rule—a government which will do justice to all, and offer to every one the highest possible stimulus to great and persistent effort, by assuring to each the enjoyment of his full share of the proceeds of his toil, no matter in what part of the vineyard he labors, or to what occupation, profession or calling he devotes himself.